

Masthead Logo

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# Trembesi

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ARIF BAGUS PRASETYO

*Trembesi*

Pitch-black and towering  
Birds making nests on the strength of her arms.

Grand castle for red ants and lizards  
An architecture growing from its own shadow.

The day is about to collapse. Her weather-beaten joints  
Grow weaker and twisted.

With bitter seeds of karma hanging  
She learns to love all unworthy of love.

Conversing with ghosts all night  
Underworld dwellers, eyes awash with milk

Whose breasts were once full of January rain  
And whose nipples erect skyward licked by the sun

She used to roam abhorring stars  
Only walking to kill distance, forgetting directions

Not thinking of arriving anywhere  
Not entering anyone's paradise

And shouting to those who linger, falling  
In God:

"Eternal life beheads monuments  
or buries itself into underground extinction!"

They're angry and curse her to vanish  
Absorbed into the black tree's cambium:

The king crowned with a kite-frame  
Tree rings and their prophecies.

Tower of prayer-call in the distance. Birds arrive  
Pecking the dusk's last light with their golden warbles.

The peasants hurry home to prepare fire and pray.  
A visage, a pattern from a simple surah

I scratch the body that groans in the trunk.

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NOTES

*Trembesi* is the name of a tree (*Pipturus nicanus*).

*Surah* is a division of the Koran.